

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: EUR 65/001/2005 (Public)
News Service No: 018
24 January 2005

Macedonia: Proposed amnesty leads to impunity

Amnesty International is concerned about the proposed amnesty bill submitted to the Macedonian Assembly on 13 January 2005 by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization -- People's Party (VMRO-NP). The proposed amnesty would apply to all Macedonian citizens who committed crimes in connection with the armed conflict of 2001 up to 2 August 2002.

As such, the proposed amnesty would cover all those responsible for the murder of seven Pakistani citizens and one Indian citizen at Rashtanski Lozja on 2 March 2002, as well as others responsible for serious crimes in this period. Amnesty International notes that among those charged with these murders are leading members of the then government including former Minister of the Interior Ljube Boshkovski who remains in detention in Croatia in connection with the Rashtanski Lozja case. The organization believes that the proposed amnesty has a political dimension in that one of its aims is to absolve members of the previous government and others connected to it, including members of the security forces, accused of serious human rights violations.

Amnesty International believes that those responsible for serious human rights abuses and violations should be brought to justice and should not benefit from amnesties. The organization has written to all members of the Macedonian assembly urging them to reject the proposed amnesty.